Implementation Stages

A. Description of Implementation Framework

Implementation Stages:

Implementation is not an event. Implementation is "a specified set of activities designed to put into practice an activity or program of known dimensions." These activities occur over time in stages that overlap and that are revisited as necessary dimensions.

Implementation is a process involving multiple decisions, actions, and corrections to change the structures and conditions necessary to successfully implement and sustain new programs and innovations. Research shows that planned change is a recursive process that happens in discernible stages. Conducting stage-appropriate implementation activities is necessary for successful new practices to be used and for organizations and systems to change in order to support new ways of work.

There are four functional Implementation Stages:

- Exploration Stage
  The Exploration Stage is a critical starting place when States, districts, and schools are considering change. Taking the time to explore what to do, how to do it, and who will do it saves time and money and improves the chances for success. This stage also is the time to assess potential barriers to implementation related to funding, staffing, referrals, and system changes. The result of the Exploration Stage is a clear implementation plan with tasks and time lines to facilitate the installation and initial implementation of the program. The key functions of the Exploration Stage include:
  - Identify Needs and Options
  - Create Readiness
  - Identify Usable Intervention
  - Develop Team Structures
  - Develop Communication Plan
- Installation Stage
  After making a decision to begin implementing a new practice or innovation, there are tasks that need to be accomplished before the change in practice actually begins. These activities reflect the Installation Stage of implementation. Activities during the Installation Stage create the infrastructure and make the instrumental changes necessary. Key functions of the Installation Stage include:
  - Develop Training Plan
  - Train First Cohort of Staff
  - Develop Coaching Plan
  - Establish Readiness of Data Systems
  - Establish Communication Protocols
- Initial Implementation Stage
  The Initial implementation Stage begins when the new program or practice is first being put to use. During this Stage, practitioners and staff are attempting to use newly learned skills (e.g., the evidence-based program) in the context of a school, district or State department, that is itself just learning how to change to accommodate and support the new ways of work. This is the most fragile Stage where the awkwardness associated with trying new things and the difficulties

associated with changing old ways of work are strong motivations for giving up and going back to comfortable routines. Key functions of the Initial Implementation Stage include:
- o Coaching to Support Teachers and Staff
- o Initial Assessment of Competency Drivers
- o Practice-Policy Communication Cycles
- o Data Use for Improvement Cycles
- Full Implementation Stage
Full Implementation is reached when 50% or more of the intended teachers, staff, or team members are using an effective innovation with fidelity and good outcomes. In the Full Implementation Stage the new ways of providing services are now the standard ways of work where educators and staff routinely provide high quality education services and the implementation supports are part of the way districts and schools carry out their work. Key functions of the Full Implementation Stage include:
- o Evaluation for Expected Outcomes
- o Full Use of Implementation Drivers
- o Policy Development/Changes for Sustainability

B.   SSIP Application of Implementation Framework

Phase I   Exploration and Identification of an Improvement Activity
Phase II   Support for LEA and Program Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices and Evaluation Plan
Phase III   Multi-year Plan

C.   Discussion Questions

1. How do SEAs/LAs need to adjust current systems to better support a systematic implementation process?

2. What additional professional development will the state need to operationalize implementation frameworks?

3. How can the state better leverage resources and align other initiatives to support systemic improvement?

4. How can the state be better equipped to sustain evidence-based practices with fidelity?